

THE  
*Inheritance of the Saints in Light;*

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Set forth in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd at *Whitehall*, August 11. 1700.

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By AB. CAMPION, D. D. Dean of  
*Lincoln*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His  
MAJESTY.

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L O N D O N,

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## COLOSSIANS I. 12.

*Giving thanks unto the Father, who  
hath made us meet to be partakers  
of the Inheritance of the Saints in  
Light,*

**T**HESE Words stand here as a great inforcement of Duty, *to walk worthy of the Lord in all well pleasing.* And as a Sovereign Cordial to support the Spirits of Christians under their sharpest Trials; to bear them not only with Patience but with Joy and Thanksgiving, as the Context informs us.

It is the Christian Faith only that can with good Reason Administer such comfort under the Crosses of this World; because how afflictive soever they may sometimes appear to sense or vulgar apprehension, yet if compared to the Gospel-Treasures, the Joys above, they are light, very light.

Amongst all the Afflictions of this Life, nothing (I think) pierces more to the quick than the loss of a Person dear to us, especially when it surprizes. And yet if God think fit, to tear from our bosoms the Delight of our Eyes, the Darling of our Souls; our Church has directed us in her Funeral-Service (so full of Faith is her Holy Office,) to give God thanks for the Cloudy passage of his Providence. It is a strong

Combat between Flesh and Spirit, when we are engaged thus to thank him with Tears in our Eyes; but Faith will justify it.

The Great Disposer of all things has at this time call'd us of this Nation to a Signal Exercise of this Faith, by an amazing Providence, *on a sudden* snatching from our Embraces our young *Josiah*, the Delight of the present, the great Hope of the future Age. We had not time to think, not time to *Pray*, to hold, if possible, the Almighty's Hand: Immoderate Vertue is seldom long-liv'd; it is often dangerous to be loved too much. The Divine Jealousie will not permit us to be confident in Man; for this Reason perhaps not long since we met with a very fatal disappointment of our Hopes. This Stroke, succeeding the other, is so much the more severe; we can scarce discern the *Fathers* hand, it looks so very angry. And yet we are sure God is always Good, whether we are ready with our Reasons or no. Can we then heartily thank God for this? We have done it already at his much lamented Funerals; and if Heaven exceeds the Earth, we had reason so to do.

We Inhabitants of Earth are apt to be too partial to our present state of Things. Such is our fond admiration for Earthly Treasures, tho' we are Christians, as perhaps to pity the hard Fate of this young Prince, for being deprived of so near a prospect to a Crown. Foolish pity! Such short thinking betrays the sleepiness of Reason as well as Faith, not considering the Scene is now so chang'd, that whatever Delight He might once take in his Temporal Birth-right, Earthly Crowns now appear despicable in his Eye, who is admitted into that Heavenly Inheritance



Inheritance of Light, my Text holds forth to us. The Advance is His, the Loss is only ours.

Many may be the Great Consequences of this Fatal Stroke as to us, but it is not my business here to instruct in Politicks, or to provoke your Passions by a Panegyrick; rather, as my Text directs, to excite your Faith, and describe what Comfort is thence to be derived under this, and all our greatest Calamities. When our Affairs here afford us no good prospect, look up, our Faith will never fail us. The more tottering our Condition seems here to be, the greater reason we have to give God thanks for the hopes of an Eternal Inheritance, which in the Gospel is brought to light.

What Rewards God has treasured up for good Men in the other World, was the grand Discovery the Son of God came from Heaven to make. He scatter'd the Clouds with which the face of Heaven was covered, and assured the World of that Eternal Life, of which they had before but faint and wavering expectations.

Some Philosophers have observ'd, that of all the habitable Globes of the World, the Earth only is wrap'd in Clouds, made thereby a proper Seat for Sinners. A fit Emblem of Man's moral State and Condition. Those Clouds hanging in the Air as a Curtain drawn to shut them out from the sight of Heaven; being also Treasures of God's Vengeance hovering over their guilty heads, from whence do sometimes issue Storms and Tempests, and many of the most dreadful Calamities which Sin has brought upon the Earth, and its Inhabitants. But what e'er becomes of this Philosophical Notion, the Clouds which

which do more fatally veil the face of Heaven from the Sinner, are those which lie upon his own Heart, his Lusts and Passions. These do so blind the Eye of Humane Reason, as that it can neither discern the Light, nor relish the Joys of the Heavenly Mansions, nor the beauty of that Holiness which leads thither.

The Spiritual Happiness of Heaven does no more affect a vitiated Palat, than painted Glories: And the Conditions upon which the Gospel has propos'd its Immortal Crowns are to the Sinner perfect foolishness. *The pure in heart only see God*, our Saviour has told us, and they only care to see him. That this Veil then might be taken off from the Sinner's Heart, the chief part of Christ's Salvation was to save his People from their Sins, not only by making Atonement and Reconciliation for them, but by taking away the Pollution, Purging the Soul by Grace, and so qualifying it for the State of Light from which he descended, to acquaint the World plainly with the happy News of it.

1 Joh. 5. 11.

He that came from the bosom of God, and therefore best knew his Mind, has assured us upon Record, that there is a Life after this, an Eternal Life of Happiness beyond expression, and present Conception, provided for all Saints, for all that will live answerable to the holy Profession of Christianity. So much of that State and Condition at present is reveal'd as is requisite to excite attention and obedience in all that have Ears to hear. It comes with sufficient Evidence to satisfy sober Inquirers, that are contented *to be wise unto Salvation*. The Gospel of God has been adorn'd by the Example of many such Children

Children of Wisdom who have gone before us in the Faith; many that have suffer'd the loss of all things, the worst that this World could inflict, the Madness, the Wit of Cruelty, in hopes of a great recompence of Reward; many I say, whole Clouds of such Witnesses as the Apostle styles them, by reason of their numbers.

That, by the grace of God, we may be enabled at this time to make some advance towards that state of Light and Happiness, by becoming in some degree more qualified for the partaking of it, I purpose to Discourse on these Words in this Method.

I. To consider the Nature of the State and Condition of the Saints in the other World. It is here set forth as a State of *Light*.

II. The Certainty of it, the sure Title they have to it: It is their *Inheritance*.

III. The Qualifications requisite to *make them meet to partake* of it.

IV. How these Qualifications are to be obtain'd; that so we may upon good grounds, *give thanks unto God, who has made us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*.

We begin with the First; The Consideration of the State and Condition of the Saints, here signified by a State of Light.

Light is the most proper word to express a State of Happiness, and set forth to us the Heavenly State  
and

and Condition, in whatever sense we take the word *Light* ; whether

(1.) In its common or natural Sense, for a Bodily Quality, a visible Lustre or Glory. Or, (2.) For Knowledge, which is sometimes call'd Light. Or, (3.) For Purity and Holiness ; they are all of them Ingredients of the Heavenly State, and concur to compleat its happiness.

As to the First ;

If *Light* be taken in its vulgar sense for a visible Lustre and Glory, Light seems in this sense to be essential to the Notion of Heaven ; for Heaven is the Seat, the Country of Light. The Sun and Stars are Bodies Great and Glorious, yet these are but the Ornaments of the outer Court of Heaven, serving to Beautifie and Enlighten the lower World: For the Heavenly Palace, the New *Jerusalem*, as *St. John* styles it, *the Seat of God, and of the blessed Spirits*, that stands not in need of these Lights, they shine not there, they have no influence above. The Divine Apostle (*Rev. 21.*) has collected every thing that appears at present most bright and gay to help us to conceive the Glories of that Heavenly City. He represents its Walls and Gates as built of the most glistring Pearls and Precious Stones, as paved with Gold ; that there is no Night, but a perpetual Day ; no need of Sun or Moon, for the Glory of God does enlighten it, for God is Light, and the Lamb is the Light thereof, *ver. 23.* The Light of the Sun would sully and defile the pure brightness of that Region, that being fitted only to serve the uses of this Elementary World, is a gross Light, a meer Kitchen-Fire, if compared to that most refined Light with

with which God is Cloathed as with a Garment; Light inaccessible to us in our present Capacities, but those that shall be thought meet to be admitted into that State of Light (I pray God it may be the happy Lot of all here present) they shall have their Organs strengthned, fitted to approach and enjoy that Light.

For they themselves shall be Cloath'd with Light, and dress'd up in the Habit of the Country; their Earthly Tabernacles shall be transform'd into Glorious Bodies, such as their Saviour wears now in Heaven, for they shall shine then *as Suns in the Kingdom of* Mat. 13. 43. *their Father* he has assured them. Their Bodies shall be like the Glorious Body of Christ, tho' not equal to it in Glory.

Amongst the Saints themselves there shall be Degrees of Magnitude, as *one Star differs from another in Glory. They that turn many to Righteousness, saith Daniel, (12. 3.) shall shine as Stars for ever and ever;* and they especially that have Suffer'd with Christ, shall be also Glorified with him. They that thought nothing too dear for their God, but had the Grace and Courage to Die for their Saviour, as he had Died for them, their mangled Bodies shall shine next to his in Glory.

This imperfect Account of that State of Light may suggest to us the Happiness of it, for Light is pleasant to behold; it is so much the experience of every one that has Eyes to behold it, as that I need not quote *Solomon* for it. Light gives Beauty to all things, it is the Paint and Varnish of the World, it is the Life of it; for when Light breaks in upon us, it awakens and gives new Life to the

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Soul,

*lumen cor  
→ 6, 19*

Soul, it brisk the Spirits, and puts them in Tune for Joy and Mirth.

Whereas on the Contrary, by *Darkness* is signified a State of Melancholy and Misery. The Scene of Grief and Sorrow is black, the Afflicted shut out the Light, and condemn themselves to Darkness. Darkness is a sad ingredient of the Miseries of Hell, it is the essential Character of that place of horror; for the melancholy abode of the Damned is express'd to us, by a Dungeon of Darkness, of utter extream Darkness, the very blackness of Darkness. This makes the Sorrows of that Place more oppressive to the Spirit, its terrors more frightful and amazing. Besides, Darkness gives scope and liberty to the Rage of guilty Consciences. We know by woful experience, that our thoughts are always most tyrannical in the Dark, and sting most severely when any thing lies cross or heavy upon the Spirit. Then when the Soul has nothing to do, but to think, has no Pleasure to divert it, nor the too common refuge of Drink to drown its Cares, nor the least pretence of Business to employ it for a moment. The steady remembrance then of the mad follies of a brutish Life, being reflected on in the Dark to all Eternity, and continually repeated with fresh vexation of Spirit, must of necessity strike deep, pierce to the quick, and wound to the very Centre of the Soul. One Prospect of that State of Darkness, one serious thought of it would quickly teach us what abundant reason they have to give God thanks (as my Text exhorts) who are, by the Grace of God, made meet to be *Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*.

(2.) *Light*



(2.) *Light* is frequently put for *Knowledge*; in this respect also the State of the Saints in Heaven may properly be stiled a State of Light. Knowledge is Spiritual Light; it has the same influence upon the Eye of the Mind, as Light upon the Eye of the Body. Knowledge is pleasant as Light, it cheers the Soul, it brings in Day upon it; it opens the World as Light, and gives a prospect even to the utmost ends of the Earth. It sees into the very Heavens, it takes in past and future Ages into its view, and by the help of Revelation even Eternity it self.

Knowledge gives Confidence and Security; the understanding Man goes on freely, and cheerfully, as he that Travels in the Day. He is in no danger of being led aside by Shadows, and false Lights, whereas Ignorance and Darknets hide and shut up every thing in Obscurity. The Ignorant Man is like one locked up in a close Room, or that walks in the dark Night; he has no prospect of Things about him, he knows not whither he goes, he stumbles, and wanders, and fears every step, all the Dangers that a benighted Fancy can represent.

*Knowledge* is often express'd by *Light* in the Holy Scriptures. Particularly the Gospel-Revelation is Emphatically called *the Light*; and he that brought this Wonderful Discovery to the World, is therefore himself stiled the *Light of the World*, enlightning every Man coming into it.

And yet tho' the Gospel Revelation be a great Light, in respect of all the Discoveries which were made before; insomuch, as the Ancient Father well observ'd, the very Children of Christians are

in their Catechisms taught to stammer forth greater Mysteries and sublimer Truths than the Wisest Philosophers could ever arrive to the Knowledge of; yet this bright Revelation is but dark in respect of Vision: We do as yet *see but as through a Glass darkly*; we have a good Right, Title, and sure Promises, but Promises are but Glimpses in respect of Enjoyment, and that full Possession with which the Saints in Heaven are invested. That therefore is well stiled a State of Light, because a State of most certain, enlarged and exalted Knowledge.

The State of this Life is really a State of Dark-ness, we see but in part. Truth is infinite, as God. A small portion of it is allotted us at present; we know no more of it, than God is pleas'd to let us into. So much of it as may be useful to entertain us here, and to secure our Eternal Interests hereafter.

But the Darknefs of this State I now complain of, is what *Sin* has brought upon our Understandings, disturbing our Judgments, and possessing us with infinite variety of wild and absurd Opinions; to that excess, as that it has pass'd into a Proverb, *So many Men, so many Minds*. We might multiply much farther, for it is seldom long that the same Man continues in the same Mind. An infallible Argument of Darknefs, for Truth is always one and the same, whatever differs from that must be Error and Darknefs. The Wisest Men are here observ'd to have their blind sides, some mistakes for which they have been remarked. All Men have Motes in their Eyes, some have Beams. It is too Notorious what senseless Errors some have espoused,

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(the Particulars are innumerable) and maintain'd with heat and fierceness, to the great disturbance of the World, and confusion of the Church of God. It might be something pardonable, if we discover'd our Weakness only in Tattle, and common Conversation, when we profess to unbend our Souls; but what Abominations do we see in the very Worship of the greatest part of the World? What ridiculous Follies and Idolatries are to be found even at Christian Altars. Their Understandings must needs want Light, that play the Fool with their God. When Men would be thought Wise, Serious, and Profound, how often do they betray the nakedness of their Souls. Our very Libraries are full of the blemishes of Mankind. And the Works of the Learned are too often standing Monuments of the defects of Human Understanding. We smile and pity the rude ignorance or short-sightedness of those that went before us, but their Cause will be revenged; (trust an ill-natur'd World for it) when those that follow us will laugh at ours. But the comfort is, we live in hopes of a better state of Life; when every Man's Brain will be settled, and all Heads set right. When the *Messiah* shall next appear, he will infallibly teach us all things. He will then conduct all those to a State of *pure Light and Knowledge*, whom by his Grace, he has made meet to be Partakers of such Happiness. All mists of Error will then be scatter'd by a clear Head, an impartial Reason, and fervent Charity. A State of pure Light and Knowledge therefore I call it.

(1.) Because there will be no Body, no Worldly Interest to cloud the Light of the Mind, or disturb

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it in its Reasonings. No Flesh and Blood enters that Kingdom; *for the Natural Body* we are assured *will be rais'd a Spiritual Body*; by which Phrase we cannot well understand less than a more refined, a more exalted state of Matter; far removed from its Original Clay; purified perhaps into Light, as near as possible into Spirit, that it may be a more suitable Companion for the Rational Spirit of Man, a fit Partner of its Glories.

(2.) A State of pure Light I call it, because a State not of Revelation, but of Vision. In a State of Revelation we know no more than the Revealer is pleas'd to discover, some Glimpses only of things, the rest often reserv'd, or wrap'd up as Mystery: But in Heaven the Saints are admitted to see with their own Eyes the naked Truth of Things. Then will be set to view the Wonders of Heaven; the Passages of Providence which are at present a Riddle, will be explain'd: The unfathomable depths of Divine Wisdom; the unsearchable, and at present inconceivable Riches of his Love and Kindness, will then be the Entertainment of our Souls; the Secrets of God which have been lock'd up from Eternity, will then be laid open; so far at least, as Creatures will be made capable of knowing them, or be made happy by them. Then may be infused New Ideas into the Understanding; for the want of which, those things which are now therefore unintelligible, may then be clear to our view. An Unity in Trinity, and a Trinity in Unity may possibly then be understood.

(3.) A State of pure Light and Knowledge it will be, because the Saints are there admitted into open and

and free Converse with the Wisest and Best of Beings, with the Renowned Worthies of all Ages: All those Departed Souls that were Wise unto Salvation, with that innumerable Quire of Holy and Blessed Spirits, the Wise Angels of God; Lastly, they are admitted into the presence of the Omniscient God himself. Our Knowledge of his *Creatures*, which is but imperfect, (for it is but little that we know of the Mysteries of the Creation) and they themselves but shadows of their Maker's Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, gives wonderful Delight at present, and is one of the most Ravishing Entertainments our Reason is here acquainted with. How transporting then must that Light be, which shews the *Creator* himself face to face, and gives a *close* view of all his Glorious Attributes in *Substance*, in Fulness and Perfection; where they live under the immediate and most powerful influence of them all, having the most lively and comfortable sense of them continually injected into the Mind. For Spirits seem to Converse by infusion of Thoughts and Affections, and the Goodness of God makes him always Communicative of himself. If we now consider a thirsty Soul, a Spirit that has an insatiable appetite after Knowledge, whose Thoughts are swifter than Lightning, plac'd not only in the prospect of but united to a Being of infinite Perfections, a Being that can never be thought through, that can never be exhausted by the Eternal thirst of his *Creatures*, the contemplation of infinite Ages. How will such a Soul continually increase in Knowledge, in brighter and brighter Light, 'till it kindles almost into a Seraphim; whither will such a Spirit grow? I cannot tell what bounds to set to that

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that Knowledge that is growing to all Eternity; nor how to measure the Powers of a Humane Soul in its State of Light and Enjoyment.

If the Soul of Man then be such a Wonderful Thing, capable of such elevations of Spirit, of Infinite Enjoyment; what pity is it, that God should intrust the greatest part of Mankind with such a precious Jewel? What pity is it that this Heaven-born Creature should be suffer'd to trifle away its time here on Earth, and which is worse, to wallow in Filth and Brutishness, and at last descend into Everlasting Darkness, and Eternal Wailings, Cursing and Blaspheming of that God, which it was made to Admire, and Adore, to Love and Praise to all Eternity.

(3.) I hasten to the 3<sup>d</sup> Acception of *Light*, as it is taken for *Purity of Heart, Holiness of Life* in reference to Practice: In this sense also, the Inheritance of the Saints above is a State of Light, because a State of the greatest Purity.

In this Sense, our Saviour enjoyns us to take care that *our Light so shine before Men, as that they may see our good Works*, and by our bright Examples be directed and enlightned in the Paths they should walk in; that by the Beauty of our Conversation they may be enamour'd and charm'd into a compli-  
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 1 Job. 1.  
 ance, and glorifie God by an ambitious imitation of our Wisdom and Holiness. Christians are therefore stiled the *Lights of the World, the Children of the Light, and of the Day*. In this sense we find it introduced by St. John, with a most pompous Preface; the four first Verses being a solemn preparation to this great Truth, *that God is Light (v. 5.) and in him*

*him is no Darkneſs at all, to fully the brightneſs of his Underſtanding, no impurity to biaſs his Will; he hates it therefore, as being perfectly contrary to his pure Nature, what communion hath Light with Darkneſs?*

Impurity is indeed Darkneſs, it clouds the Mind which is tinctured with it, as we have ſeen already in Matters of Opinion or Doctrines; in practical Matters much more. In theſe eſpecially, the Fleſh having a greater intereſt and concern, the Soul of a Man is in greater danger of being benighted and fool'd, and often made to act contrary to the Principles of all good Reaſon. The inconſiſtencies and madneſs of Sinners are every where notorious; their brutiſh and perverſe reaſonings and actings, eſpecially in moral Matters; their whole Life being a continued courſe of follies and ill humours.

*If thine Eye be Evil, ſaith our Saviour, and the Light that is in thee be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs? even as great as the Evil which is in the Eye, and bears always a proportion to the power of the reigning Luſt, being a reſult and effect of it. Hence it becomes ſo hard a thing amongſt us Sinners, to find that precious Jewel (ſo much talk'd of) Right Reaſon. Moſt certainly it is no where to be found, but in a purified Soul.* Mat. 6. 23.

The only Expedient therefore to reſtore Light to a Sinner's Soul, is to purifie it from its Luſts. For this Reaſon did Baptiſm anciently go under the Name of Illumination; as conveying the Holy Spirit with his Sanctifying Graces into the Soul; which do by degrees enlighten it here in this Life, as it paſſes from one degree of Grace unto another, 'till at Death it is compleatly Sanctified, and fitted for its Heavenly

State of Light; especially when at the Morning of the Resurrection it shall be dress'd up with its Spiritual and Glorified Body, which will then be no burthen to the Soul, as this Fleshly Tabernacle is now, but will conspire with it in its operations, in its enjoyments of God, in the perfect practice of Holiness, and all the business of Heaven. There will be right Reason in Perfection, according to the extent of its Knowledge, no Darkness at all; the whole face of the Soul will be bright and clear, not one spot to be discovered there. This is a State of Light indeed. And let me farther observe, that in proportion as the Body was purified by Grace here in this Life, shall it be more refined, more Spiritual, and have brighter degrees of Glory. Its sight of God more clear, its communications from the Fountain of Light more strong, having its Faculties extraordinarily strengthened to behold the Glorious Godhead. The more pure Souls shall be peculiarly fitted to receive the stronger impressions of Divine Love.

For the State of Light is a State of Love. If Love be the fulfilling of the Commandments, compleat Holiness can be no other than perfect Love, the Top of Heavenly Happiness. Love is the Beauty of Angels, the Glory of God himself. God is Love, and God is Light; his Love and Favour is often express'd in Scripture *by the Light of his Countenance*. Love has its Flames we all know, the Love of Saints especially. For inexpressible are the transports of a Purified Soul, when admitted into the immediate presence of God; when it has a clear view given it of the best of Beings; when it has all Goodness for its Object, all Perfection. How quickly like Lightning  
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its Affections are kindled! how vehemently! In a moment it is all on fire, and with an inflamed appetite flies to its most Beloved. Excessive Love placed upon a Creature is Torment, and does abuse the Appetite, because quickly drawn dry. But when God is the Object, Love cannot be excessive, there being enough in him to give Eternal Satisfaction. Thrice happy Souls, infinitely more than thrice happy, whose Business it is to love. They love always, they love vehemently, and yet can never, never love too much. But beyond all this, if any thing can be more; a sense of being beloved by God, of living always under the smile and shine of his Countenance. This indears all his Infinite Perfections, and gives them another Infinity.

To be beloved by a Creature below our selves is very obliging, and does wonderfully draw forth our Affections to that little thing, what e'er it be. When the Great God then infuses a sense of his Love into the Soul, it transports it into such an Extasie as is fit only for the other World. Mortality cannot bear it, Mortality cannot conceive it. It is necessary therefore that I stop here.

So near as I can conceive, such as this is that State of Light, that Inheritance of the Saints, the great Object of our Hopes, the Business of this Life, that we may be made meet to be partakers of it. If what has been Discourfed has raised in any Person desires of being well assured of this State of Happiness, I proceed.

2dly, To consider the Certainty we have of it; our good Title to it, it is call'd an *Inheritance*.

The whole Creation is the Family of God, he provides for it every day; he gives even the Ravens their food: But Man that was made after the Image of God,

God, has a more particular Relation to him. By his Natural likeness he would have appear'd a true Son of God, had he preserv'd his Original Character undefil'd. But what Man lost by his Folly, God has mercifully restor'd to him again by Grace. So that he who is by his Natural Birth now a Child of Wrath, is by his Spiritual Birth become a Child of God again. He is adopted Son and Heir of God, not for any desert of his. There can be no pretence of merit in being Born to an Estate, and truly not more in being adopted Son of God. It was meer Grace, unprovoked Goodness. For whilst Man continu'd in his Rebellion, whilst in his Blood and Filth, God cast his Love upon him. He past by those Noble Creatures the Angels, for Reasons best known to himself, to make Man his Son and his Heir too, by giving him a good Title to the Estate of God his Father, who is Lord of Heaven and Earth. Who would not be ambitious to be his Heir, who has such large Patrimony to bestow; not cantled into Portions, but every Heir has a Title to the whole. *He that overcomes shall inherit all things*: We are assured by the Infalible Charter, (*Rev. 21. 7.*) *They shall Inherit the Earth*, for none have so good a Title to the Creature, as those who honour the Creator. So much of the Earth they shall be sure of, as their loving Father sees best for them, and will best consist with their Eternal Inheritance. For Heaven is the chief Patrimony of God.

Here we live like Heirs under Age, under Tutors and Governors, 'till we are train'd up and fitted to have our Estate put into our hands, to be invested with the full Possession of that vast Inheritance; *Rom. 8. 17.* where we are to be admitted as *Joint Heirs* to the  
Natural



Natural Son of God, partakers of the same Glories with himself, *sitting with him upon Thrones.*

*Mat. 19. 28.*

In this Life we have given us that ample Security that is fit for Heirs at present to have; sufficient for our encouragement; our Immortal Inheritance being set before us in a clear Light. Eternal Life is not secured to all the Heirs of Salvation by absolute Decree; for it is plain, *that many perish for whom Christ died.* And it will no doubt be an heavy-aggravation of the Damnation of Christians, that they refused that Salvation which they might have obtain'd, and sold their Spiritual-Birth-right for a Mess of Pottage. It will be the Sting of their Misery that it was by their own fault that they fell short, God having given all the Security that is fit for him to give. For we have (1.) His repeated *Promises* of Salvation to all that Believe, and Repent; and sooner shall Heaven and Earth fail, than one tittle of what he has promis'd. God *so loved the World*, his Promises are so very great to Sinners, as that they might appear incredible. We might with some colour of Reason stagger in our Faith, if we were not well assured of the Reality of his Promise. To help therefore our Infirmities, that we may not suspect the goodness of his word, he has (2.) Confirm'd it by an *Oath*, that our Consolation might be strong, having two immutable things to support it, the Promise and the Oath of God. And yet these two things in themselves unchangeable, for our more abundant security are (3.) farther confirm'd by the Blood of God, the Seal of the Covenant of this Eternal Life; it being an ancient way of making Covenants inviolable by Sealing them with Blood. And lastly, If it were possible for all these to fail us, this  
Covenant

*Heb. 6. 18.*

Covenant of God is Seal'd by the Spirit also, given as an Earnest of our Eternal Inheritance. His Graces are not only Pledges, but part of Payment; *the Glory of the Saints in Light* being only Grace in perfection. Having so good reason to be well satisfied with our Title to this Inheritance, *our next Concern* then may be,

3dly, To Consider of the Qualifications requisite to *make us meet to partake of it*. The State and Condition of the Place does sufficiently discover how he ought to be qualified, that would be admitted into that Holy Place. *No unclean thing can enter there*; none can be happy there. The Light will shame and expose its filthiness, and render every spot an Object of hatred and abhorrency to all the pure Inhabitants. All Works of Darkness would there appear monstrous, whatever we either are, or should be ashamed of; what wants concealment and will not bear the Light, can never be fit for a state of the purest Light. But yet we need not inquire who shall ascend into Heaven for us, to view those Regions of Happiness, and bring down to us a Description of the Place and Character of the Blessed Inhabitants. All that we need to know in this Case is very nigh us; the direct way to Heaven is in the Book of God, which we have in our hands, drawn out in plain Rules and Precepts, and if it be not our fault it is legible in our Hearts also.

Besides this, because *Examples* are usually more powerful, as having more of Life in them, than the dead Letter of a Precept; we have therefore in the Gospel drawn out to the Life an Heir of Heaven.

God shew'd us at first what manner of Men we ought to be, even such as he made us at first, when we came pure out of his hands, when we were like himself.

himself. For it is the Design of Religion to reduce us back again by the Methods of Grace, as near as possible to our Primitive Original State; to Sanctifie and make us clean, even Innocent once again if it might be. However, to come as near to Innocence as our present State of Flesh and Blood will permit.

If much of that State of Innocence is not to be learnt from the first *Adam*, by reason of his short continuance in that Original State, in the second *Adam* we have a compleat Pattern, it being the great Design of his coming from Heaven, at least of his living so long upon the Earth, that he might shew the way thither by his Example.

He gave us therefore the Pattern of a most Holy, and for the most part of a very imitable Life. A continued practice of those Vertues with which he would have his Followers to be exercis'd and distinguish'd, and train'd up for their Heavenly Inheritance. We may thence learn the whole Duty of Man, towards God, and every Person.

For he did truly *Love God*, as he requires us to do, *with all his Heart and Soul*, *God was in all his thoughts*. It was therefore his constant endeavour to do what he knew to be *most pleasing to him*. It was *his meat and drink to do the will of his Father, to work the work of him that sent him while it was day, before the night came*. When but Twelve Years Old, he slip'd from his Secular Parents, that he might spend some time in *his Father's House*, or as we translate it, *be about his Father's Business*. Knowing what was wrote in the Volume of God's Book, he voluntarily came to do his Will; seeing it highly pleasing to his Father that lost Mankind should be Redeem'd, he freely offer'd himself

self to the Work, tho' they were bitter things that the incensed Father required of Man's Surety; But so that God might be glorified, it pleas'd him to become an Object of the greatest Misery and Contempt. To give us an Example of an intire dependance upon the Providence of God, and trust in him, he made himself poor, destitute of Worldly Comfort and Accommodation; *the Foxes have holes, but he had not where to lay his head.* He could indeed *turn stones into Bread*, but we do not read that ever he work'd a Miracle to sustain his own hunger, but trusted himself intirely to his Father's keeping. 'Tis true, he complain'd with loud passion upon the Cross, but not from despair, or the least mistrust of God's failing him; for with confidence he *commended his Spirit into his hands*; but a quick sense he had of that unusual change in his Father's Countenance. It touch'd him to the quick, that the beloved Father should look so full of Anger upon his most beloved Son: It was the sting of his Sufferings to see a Cloud and severe Frown upon that Beauteous Face, which always used to shine upon him with a pleasing Aspect; now especially whilst he knew himself to be performing an Act highly acceptable to his Father.

Observe yet farther, and imitate; his Conversation was in Heaven whilst here on Earth, his heart always there, his Discourses tended thither, Heavenly things being ever predominant in his Thoughts; he was always ready to take fit Occasions to improve all Occurrences to Spiritual Purposes, and raise up the Minds of his Company to the things above. He sought opportunities of Retirement, that he might have frequent and immediate Converse with God his Father.

Father. Those hours wherein Nature call'd for Ease and Sleep, he very often employ'd in his Devotions, spending whole Nights in Prayer. He sat loose from the World, perfectly dead to it, The great and most difficult Lesson of Religion. He had no affection for the things of it, they appear'd not worth his thoughts. But yet his contempt of them was decent and generous; he did not with proud disdain spurn at them as a rude Stoick would have done; he did not affront Men of Quality and Title, but paid all becoming respect to those Honours of the World, which he had not such regard for, as to assume them to himself. In his common Conversation he was very obliging, affable, courteous, always in good humour, conversing freely, even with the worst of Men, *with Publicans and Sinners*, to make them if possible, wiser and better. He was always disposed to put the most fair and candid interpretation upon the Behaviour of Men, ready to make the best excuses for them that their Case would admit of, with any tolerable shew or colour of Reason; willing to impute their faults and neglects to infirmity, the *weakness of their Flesh* or Mind, rather than to Malice, or ill design.

When the Case would admit of no excuse, but he was treated with the vilest usage, and ill language, yet he reviled not again, but by cool and good argument endeavour'd to convince them of their Blasphemy and Outrage. How calmly did he receive even *Judas* himself in an Act of the basest Treachery, with the Title of *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* When his mind was loaded with grief, to that extremity that he *sweat drops of Blood*, no murmuring, fretful or discontented word dropt from him, he retain'd his Temper as well as his Integrity. When he hung upon the Cross in most excessive pain, no uneasiness of Spirit appear'd, but he was quietly submissive to his Father's Will. His whole Life was a constant course of Charity, always doing good to the Bodies or Souls of

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Men; *healing their Diseases, raising their Dead to Life,* and at last dying himself an accursed Death, that his Enemies, his Enemies that used him despitefully, that hated him to the death, might be saved.

This is our Calling, Christians, this is our Pattern, *Let us go and do likewise.* If we can thus live, if we can thus love, then are we *meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* But if the Case be thus with us, we may begin with amazement to cry out, *who then can or shall be saved?* We seem to have reason to fear that our Saviour has undone us by his Example; has carried the Mark so high, and propos'd such Conditions of Salvation as Flesh and Blood can never reach to, can never hope upon these terms to be made meet *partakers of the Heavenly Inheritance.*

4thly, It highly concerns us therefore to inquire, if they be possible,

How these Qualifications are to be obtain'd.

In a word, it is true that Flesh and Blood, Corrupt Flesh and Blood especially, can never advance to that pitch of Holiness as to live as our Saviour lived, and cannot by its own strength (we may be sure) fit it self for an admittance into that high and Holy Place. But the Comfort is, we do not go forth in our own strength, we have the same Spirit of God promis'd and given to every baptiz'd Christian, which sanctified our Lord Christ himself, and enabled him to walk as he walk'd. 'Tis true, he had the Spirit of God given him in much greater measure, and was *anointed above all his fellows* (as the Apostle has taught us to speak) whether Angels or Men, for the advancing and perfecting of all kind of Vertue and Holiness; and tho' it may not consist with the method of God's Grace, and our present State and Condition, that the Spirit of God should act so powerfully in us; yet if it be not our own fault, he will certainly act as *effectually*, and afford us sufficient strength for the doing of what is requisite in



in order to Salvation, and by degrees will lead us on towards that perfection, as will fit us to *dwell with the Saints above*. The difficulty of the Work can give us no just reason to despair, when we have a God working in us, and will not fail to do his part: But yet, tho' nothing is impossible with God, and he will not fail us, there is something for us to do in this great Work; there lies our Danger, therefore there ought to be our Care. The Advice which I shall briefly offer shall be this, and so Conclude.

I. To be very Constant and Diligent in the use of those Means which the Gospel has prescribed; For a Qualification for Heaven is not a Fitt, but a lasting Temper of the Mind, which is only to be obtain'd by a Constancy in Religious Practice. Let every Morning and Evening at least have its fix'd times for Private Devotion, with serious application of Mind: Let us every day look over and examine well our Account between God and our own Souls. This is an excellent Expedient to make short Reckonings at last. He that makes even with God every day by Repentance, is every night qualified for Heaven, and has but one day to account for, when ever he dies.

Read some part of the Word of God, digest it well by Meditation, this supplies the Soul with its daily Food; for *Spirits* must be nourish'd as well as *Bodies*; be continually fed with good Thoughts, or they will languish, or which is worse, grow Brutish and Devilish. In their proper Seasons, Publick Ordinances are to be duly attended, and more Solemn times of Self-examination fix'd; but I lay the greatest stress of Religion upon those private daily Performances. In the neglect of these, it is impossible to be Religious in earnest, and keep up a true Spirit of Devotion. It is difficult to perswade to these, but they being once secured, the rest will easily follow. The Gospel-Means are not empty dead Ceremonies, like those of the Law,

Law, they are *Living Ordinances*, they are Bodies with a Soul, for the *Holy Ghost* accompanies the due performance of them; which as at first convey'd with the waters of Baptism to the Soul; so by every Sermon, Prayer or Sacrament rightly perform'd, takes fresh possession, and comes in with new degrees of strength. A diligent use of these means of Religion are therefore necessary, as being the only way to obtain and secure this Spirit of God.

2. Keep your Eye always fix'd upon your Inheritance, having his Eye upon the *recompence of the Reward*, animating our Saviour himself to go through with his difficult Undertaking. This is one of the peculiar Advantages of the Gospel, that the Gates of Heaven are in a manner set open to us, and such a view given into those Regions of Happiness, as is sufficient to excite to Duty, and keep us in our way thither. More knowledge of Heaven might do hurt at present, might exalt us into rapture and extasie, and make us impatient of tarrying here. God has therefore wisely proportion'd these Discoveries to our present Circumstances and Necessities. It concerns us to make a right use of this peculiar benefit of the Gospel, never to lose the sight of Heaven which it affords. *All the Kingdoms of the Earth, and Glory of them*, are not sufficient to make an impression upon that Mind that is full of Heaven. He walks therefore with the World under his feet, having his Heart always with his Treasure above; and he that lives above the World at present, where should he live but in Heaven hereafter?

Being by the Grace of God, thus *made meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, let him give thanks to the Father, and with joyful Lips bless his Holy Name, and begin his Eternal Praises.

*To God the Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, now, and for Evermore.*

F I N I S.



